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# A Conflict Of National Interest

Although we usually view the political and social scene from a different viewpoint, we find ourselves in accord with Columnist Marianne Means in the belief that 110 people are a lot of individuals to keep a secret.

We believe a lot of others would agree—especially if it were explained that the 110 were all members of congress.

The reference is to the Columnist's piece on the proposal that the Central Intelligence Agency be required to give routine briefings of its activities to the Armed Services and Foreign Relations committees of the House and Senate.

The proposal has been made by the Hon. Sherman Cooper of Kentucky, fourth ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee whose chairman is the Hon. J. William Fulbright, Democrat of Arkansas.

At the present time the CIA is required to give such reports only to five subcommittees of the two houses, these including only the senior members of the four standing committees.

Quite naturally the heads of CIA (to say nothing of the boys down in the field) are quaking in their boots at the thought of 110 members of congress being made privy to their activities and this is not strange for if there was one fact on which there was any general agreement in the recent Pentagon Papers hassle it was that Washington, D.C., was about the loosest place in the world when considered from the secrecy-security viewpoint.

One can easily imagine the confusion that would exist as 110 members of congress rushed from the multi-exits of the State Department to the taxi stations in an effort to be the first to hold a press conference after receiving something hot like the CIA employment of the Indochina mountain people to locate Chinese launch sites.

We would venture the guess that CIA might as well close up shop if required to give an accounting of its activities to

110 members of congress, considering also the fact that most of them would have a husband and - or wife.

CIA not only has the difficult problem of furnishing information and intelligence to the President, but it frequently appears that it faces the task of justifying its existence and activities to a large portion of the 435 members of congress. It is rather difficult to accomplish such a mission when such activities are supposed to be known only within the organization.

To its other difficulties, Central Intelligence has the problem of recruiting personnel—commonly known as agents—and this is about as difficult as recruiting for the famous 82nd Airborne, even when the advertisement promises a five-day week, no k.p., and short orders in the mess halls at all hours, including a dish of foam.

Perhaps we have seen too much of Mission Impossible and the electric wizardry of Barney and Jim, but the avid followers of this series should remember that the "Secretary will deny any knowledge" if any of the team gets caught with a hand in the cookie jar.

This is the sort of decision which members of congress are required to make—and incidentally for which they are paid \$47,500 per annum, plus fringe benefits. We have become big boys now and face the necessity of making disagreeable decisions, of which this kind of business is one.

The member of congress is responsible for the actions of the government. Equally as important, he or she is responsible for the disbursement of public funds. To this is added the responsibility for national defense, including methods.

The natural conflict ought to be apparent to all, just as is the conflict within the mind of the President. Consequently we find it necessary to ask ourselves if the system can operate, but, if the answer is no, what can do better?

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